

R 251703Z AUG 88
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3560
INFO GULF WAR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ROME 19700

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PREL IR IZ IT

SUBJECT: GUILT FOR THE GULF WAR: IRAQ PAYS FOR AD TO
GIVE ITS SIDE

¶11. THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT PAID FOR A HALF-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT WHICH APPEARED IN THE AUGUST 25 ISSUE OF ROME'S CENTRIST "IL MESSAGGERO." ENTITLED "IRAN-IRAQ: WHO STARTED THE WAR," THE IRAQI AD DETAILS "A SERIES OF (IRANIAN) VIOLATIONS AND MILITARY AGGRESSIONS" AGAINST IRAQ IN 1979 AND 1980, LEADING UP TO SEPTEMBER 22, 1980, WHEN IRAQ "WAS FORCED TO EXERCISE ITS RIGHT TO LEGITIMATE DEFENSE." THE IRAQI STATEMENT STRESSES THAT, DESPITE IRAQ'S "FAVORABLE ACCEPTANCE" OF KHOMEINI'S REGIME, IRAN "CLAIMED" ITS RIGHT TO "EXPORT" THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION "WITH THE USE OF FORCE," SELECTING IRAQ AS ITS FIRST TARGET. IRAN, THE IRAQIS CLAIM, "INSTIGATED" CIVIL UNREST IN IRAQ, HOSTED AND AIDED BARZANI'S IRAQI-KURDISH OPPOSITION GROUP, UNILATERALLY BACKED OUT OF THE IRAN/IRAQ 1975 ACCORD ON THE SHATT-EL-ARAB, AND CARRIED OUT A SERIES OF ATTACKS AGAINST IRAQI TERRITORY.

¶12. COMMENT: WITH THE DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ SET TO GET UNDERWAY IN GENEVA IT LOOKS LIKE THE IRAQIS ARE AT LAST TRYING TO PUT OUT THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY ON THE WAR'S ORIGINS.

RABB